

CIA Among Exhibitors At Urban League

San Diego Union Staff Dispatch

LOS ANGELES — Elbow to elbow in the Convention Center, the exhibitors are out in force at the National Urban League conference — 178 agencies, companies and corporations giving away practically everything while trying to sell themselves.

But among all of those pitchmen — and pitchwomen — there is a new exhibitor at the conference, whose mere presence has been the talk of many delegates.

They give away no hair spray, no key chains or glue samples or dental floss, raffle off no appliances or color television sets. This is a small stand, a simple three-part, seven-foot display panel with a few pamphlets and a small stack of resume forms, all located in the back of the exhibit hall.

A very low-key display for an outfit with a large budget, representatives scattered across the globe and a worldwide reputation. But then, the CIA is known for low-key operations.

The Central Intelligence Agency is among the 178 exhibitors at the National Urban League conference. So is the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

The FBI is there. So is the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Immigration and Naturalization Ser-

vice, the Bureau of Prisons and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, all lined up together in their own row. NASA is there, too, along with VISTA and the Peace Corps and the Bureau of Health Statistics.

With the exception of the last organization, the objective is basically the same for all of them, public relations and recruitment. Their pitches all are essentially the same — our doors are open, the traditional conceptions of our agencies no longer apply, our traditional aversions toward minorities are gone.

And they'll tell you, furthermore, that it's really no big deal. Or if it is, then it shouldn't be.

"I think this is the first time we've been here," said Larry Curran, a regional CIA recruiter who operates out of the agency's office in Lawndale. "I don't know why we haven't been coming here all along.

"We need to try to get people to think of CIA in terms of careers. We need computer analysts, we need cartographers, we need accountants, we need medical specialists."

And people have been asking, Curran said.

"I'd say we've had a very good number of resume forms picked up by people, filled out and returned," he said.

— By Greg Gross

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